2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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For several hours they wander up and down the principal streets, past the nougat vendors, past the dazzling houses with their doors and shutters thrown open to attract the eyes of all to festal drapes and carpets, gleaming cookers and new refrigerators. The crowd moves on past the packed bars and through the festooned clubs, their silver trophies all on show. Stopping now and then to eat and drink and talk with friends, they move into the church and past the banks of flowers that stand before the statue of the patron saint. From there, now surrounded by the red damask and the cut-glass crowns suspended from the golden ceilings, they pass before the silver altar-front and gaze at the jewel-encrusted reliquaries on display beside it. Now and then there is a soft discussion of price and craftsmanship as a new picture or silver candlestick reaches past the guttering candles for the attention of the crowd. Slowly, for many stop to kneel and say a prayer, the people move out through the door and past the bandstand, and on to make the round again.

The climax of the evening comes at eleven o'clock, when the forest of standing fireworks which have been planted in the square is lighted, and the second day of the festa closes in a shower of sparks and acrid smoke.

On the morning of the feast-day, there is a Solemn High Mass during which some noted clerical orator delivers a lengthy and bombastic panegyric of the saint. After the service the committees of the various clubs make formal calls on each other and exchange hospitality. The parish priest and the village clergy also call on each of the clubs and associations. Following this, the people retire to their houses for huge luncheons with their close relatives. In the late afternoon the long procession with the statue of the saint slowly moves from the church. The saint, carried by white-robed members of the confraternities, stops on the threshold to take the salute of 21 petards and barrage of smaller rockets, the *kaxxa infernal*, which often last up to twenty minutes.[1] As the saint at last leaves the church he is cheered on his way by groups of shouting devotees. The crowds are thicker than the night before, and amuse themselves in much the same way. There are also more bands, and sometimes as many as five will be

[1] These petards are usually immense. They are often made from half-gallon tins packed with gelignite that is either stolen or extracted from dud shells and bombs fished up from military target areas by festa enthusiasts. Occasionally their explosions break windows.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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the Pope and the Archbishop, stopping now and then to shout insults at the passing Labour supporters. The square on the other side of the police cordon began to fill up with people returning from the meeting and others who left their houses to see what the excitement was about. Gradually the songs became louder and more excited, and the shouts hoarser. By then it was getting quite dark, but I could see Dun Mikiel in the front row, his hands thrust tensely into the pockets of his cassock, scowling at the passers-by while he smoked cigarette after cigarette. The tension by this time was almost electric. Suddenly, one of the local MLP supporters returning to the Labour club replied to a taunt by making a threatening gesture. The crowd in front of the church booed him loudly and surged forward. The police, anxious to hurry the trouble-maker off the square, pushed him a bit too hard and he stumbled and fell. This angered the crowd on the other side of the square and it began to press through the police cordon. At this point police reinforcements arrived and cleared the square in a few moments. Their prompt action prevented an ugly situation from going further, for there had been well over a thousand angry people facing each other, separated by less than two dozen unarmed policemen.

Four days after the meeting, Dun Bert organized a pilgrimage of reparation to atone for the insults of the MLP speakers. The procession of some 1,200 people reciting the Rosary escorted the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows through the area behind the church where the Labour meeting had been held. About 400 of the participants were outsiders who had come to Kortin from other parts of the island for the occasion. After the procession the crowd gathered in front of the church where a Mass was said. A noted Jesuit orator then rebutted the MLP speeches point by point. The whole affair had almost passed off without incident when a number of stones and bottles were thrown from behind walls at the buses and cars leaving the village.

But if there are relatively few face-to-face meetings of this kind in Kortin or elsewhere, there are many disputes that divide and weaken the clubs and associations. This matter has particularly affected Sur Gorg, the president of the Social Club, who feels responsible for preserving its unity in these difficult times. In Kelinu's, where many of the influential regulars are members of the Social Club, they say that it has become a Mintoff stronghold.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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543 perhaps excites more interest to the visitors than the beautiful animals which are considered a great ornament to the show.

Sta. VENERA

796 A similar occasion as that of *Imnaria* is afforded to the never tired merry-makers country-women, on the 4th Sunday of July, the day dedicated to the festival of St. Anne.

As early as 4 o'clock in the morning of this day, scores of carts, loaded with gaily dressed country girls, leave their respective villages and proceed to Sta. Venera, a small church at Hamrun, which is very nicely decorated for the occasion.

[537] Here a sermon on the life of the great saint is preached to the people as-

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

sembled, from a wooden pulpit in the open air, near the small chapel. When the sermon is over the jolly country girls take a great delight in the fair which is held along the space in front of the small church, which is blocked up from end to end with temporary booths. 796 537 796 543 [366]

The wares offered for sale are of the simplest description, consisting principally of scapulars, pictures, gay woollen and cotton sashes and handkerchiefs, cheep trinkets, and glass and china of inferior quality; but there is enough colour and glitter to produce a pretty kaleidoscopic effect when touched by the rays of the bright shining sun. 796 543 438

On this morning the scores of vendors of sweetmeats, lemonade, and iced water seem endowed with extra power of throat and lungs for vociferating these refreshing compounds, and the set up [265]